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Wednesday | February 27, 2019 | 8pm | Longy's Pickman Hall

## Beatrice Rana piano

### Frédéric Chopin

#### Études, Book II, Opus 25

- No. 1, in A-flat Major, *Allegro sostenuto* 'Aeolian Harp'
- No. 2, in F minor, *Presto*
- No. 3, in F Major, *Allegro (leggiere)*
- No. 4, in A minor, *Agitato*
- No. 5, in E minor, *Vivace (scherzando)*
- No. 6, in G-sharp minor, *Allegro*
- No. 7, in C-sharp minor, *Lento* 'Cello'
- No. 8, in D-flat Major, *Vivace*
- No. 9, in G-flat Major, *Allegro assai (leggiere)* 'Butterfly'
- No. 10, in B minor, *Allegro con fuoco*
- No. 11, in A minor, *Lento – Allegro con brio (risoluto)* 'Winter Wind'
- No. 12, in C minor, *Allegro molto con fuoco* 'Ocean'

### INTERMISSION

### Maurice Ravel

#### Miroirs ('Mirrors'), M.43

- Noctuelles* ('Nocturnal moths'), *Très léger*
- Oiseaux tristes* ('Sad birds'), *Très lent*
- Une barque sur l'océan* ('A boat on the ocean'),  
*D'un rythme souple*
- Alborada del gracioso* ('The clown's morning song'), *Assez vif*
- La vallée des cloches* ('The valley of the bells'), *Très lent*

### Igor Stravinsky

#### Suite from *The Firebird* (trans. Guido Agosti)

- Danse infernale*
- Berceuse*
- Finale*

Ms. Rana records exclusively for Warner Classics.  
[Beatriceranapiano.com](http://Beatriceranapiano.com)

Ms. Rana appears by arrangement with Primo Artists, New York, NY [primoartists.com](http://primoartists.com)

### Debut Series Sponsors

Harriet & David Griesinger and  
the Longy School of Music of Bard College

2018-19 Season Sponsors Amy & Joshua Boger

Welcome to the seventh season of the Debut Series at the Longy School of Music.

The Debut Series was launched in 2012 as a showcase for artists in the early stages of their careers in Boston debut performances. The Celebrity Series of Boston and the Longy School of Music of Bard College have formed this unique partnership to allow the talents of these young international artists to be experienced in the acoustic excellence and atmospheric intimacy that Pickman Hall delivers so well. In addition to performing, each Debut Series artist conducts a master class or educational session with students from the Longy School, providing them unique access to professional artists only slightly older than they are, and providing life lessons as well as musical ones. The combination of performance and education stem from our shared values emphasizing musical excellence, and also focus on the emotional and humanistic development of artists.

With thanks to sponsors Harriet and David Griesinger, we are proud to present this season's group of Debut Series artists in performance, and to enrich the Longy students' development as musicians who make a difference.



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## Notes on the program

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)

*Études, Book II, Opus 25*

The original purpose of the *étude*, a study-piece or exercise, was to teach skills; in Chopin's time it became a vehicle to display them. Throughout its history, the *étude* generally considered a single technical problem of execution and was often based on a single theme. First in the line that led to Chopin, were the keyboard exercises or *Klavierübung* of Bach intended as instructive works for composers as well as players. The *Essercizi*, thirty sonata-like works by Domenico Scarlatti, published in 1738, came next in that progression. By the later 18th century, in Mozart's time, keyboard playing had become a more sociable, not always professional pursuit, creating a new market of music for amateurs, with an altered structure and focus.

When Chopin composed his sets of *études*, he actually initiated a different form: the concert *étude*, a work where the technical difficulty and the musical content were of similar high standards. The Romantic concert *étude* is a short work in which, as Charles Rosen said in *The Romantic Generation*, "the musical interest is derived almost entirely from a single technical problem. A mechanical difficulty directly produces the music, its charm, and its pathos. Beauty and technique are united, but the creative stimulus is the hand, with its arrangement of muscles and tendons, its idiosyncratic shape." Chopin composed his *études* for public performance; they immediately received admiration from the composers who were his contemporaries: Schumann, Mendelssohn, Liszt, and Berlioz. Listening to these works, one appreciates the distinctive, pure piano sound recognizable as Chopin's.

Chopin wrote twenty-seven *Études*, two big sets of twelve, and three more for a piano instruction book. He composed the first set, Op. 10, between 1829 and 1832; it was published in 1833 with a dedication to Franz Liszt. He completed the second, Op. 25, between 1832 and 1836, and published it in 1837 with a dedication to Liszt's companion, the Countess Marie d'Agoult. The three *Nouvelles Études* were composed for Moscheles, a famous Czech pianist, around 1840. Although these works are valued more for their music than for their contribution to the development of modern piano technique, it is interesting and instructive for the listener to know what problems they present to the player.

In performance of the Op. 25 *Études* as a cycle, the listener will note how almost every *étude* seems to grow directly from the preceding one; it can be assumed that Chopin was consciously creating a unified work out of the series. The *études* make a grandiose impression and are memorable as studies in coloration, in pure piano sound. Each takes one motif and in a completely abstract way develops it thoroughly until the end of the piece.

Some of these pieces are so difficult for the performer that Chopin had trouble playing them himself, admitting that Liszt performed them better than he could himself. In recommending them to his students, Chopin told them that they should maintain "a maximum of suppleness...as [there are] as many different sounds as there are fingers." He warned players that the whole arm should be used to play, not just the fingers and the wrist, and he cautioned them never to practice more than three hours a day because they could injure their hands and muscles.

#### Opus 25:

**No. 1, in A-flat Major, *Allegro sostenuto*.** A quiet melody and bass emerge from the texture of *arpeggios* in contrary motion. Sometimes No. 1 is called the 'Aeolian Harp Étude.'

**No. 2, in F minor, *Presto*.** Cross-rhythms complicate the rendering of a florid melody.

**No. 3, in F Major, *Allegro (leggiero)*.** An ornamented melody is set in a rhythmically complex texture with the hands moving in opposite directions.

**No. 4, in A minor, *Agitato*.** No. 4 is a syncopated staccato study. The right hand, always playing off the beat, must also delineate legato figures and phrases.

**No. 5, in E minor, *Vivace (scherzando)*.** Evenness of touch is required in differentiating rhythmic and textural variants of the melody.

**No. 6, in G-sharp minor, *Allegro*.** This étude incorporates rapid thirds, a "modern" problem in the piano style of Chopin's time.

**No. 7, in C-sharp minor, *Lento*.** Sometimes called the 'Cello Étude,' this work has a beautiful melody for the left hand, while the right plays a countermelody and accompanying chords.

**No. 8, in D-flat Major, *Vivace*.** This étude is a study in sixths.

**No. 9, in G-flat Major, *Allegro assai (leggiero)*.** This étude is known as the 'Butterfly Étude.' It features fluttering changes from small intervals, legato, to octaves, staccato.

**No. 10, in B minor, *Allegro con fuoco*.** Difficult legato octaves are included in this étude.

**No. 11, in A minor, *Lento – Allegro con brio (risoluto)*.** The 'Winter Wind Étude' has a powerfully stated theme in the left hand, accompanied by chromatic figuration in the right.

**No. 12, in C minor, *Allegro molto con fuoco*.** Sometimes called the 'Ocean Étude,' this étude includes rushing parallel *arpeggios* with accented notes that form the melody.

**Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)**

***Miroirs ('Mirrors'), M.43***

Ravel was born in France, only a short distance from the Spanish border, to a French father and a Basque mother. Although his family moved to Paris when he was just an infant, he was always attached to the region of his birth and composed several works of Spanish inspiration. The Spanish composer Manuel de Falla once wrote, "Ravel's Spain was Spain idealized and represented by his mother. Her refined conversation, in Spanish that remained excellent always, delighted me—especially when she used to recall her youth in Madrid."

In 1904 and 1905, as he was turning thirty, Ravel wrote five piano pieces, each one complete in itself, that he assembled into a collection under the title *Miroirs* ('Mirrors'). These descriptive pieces do not attempt to present precise musical images. They reflect their subjects, often reality seen at a distance; they also reflect *about* their subjects: philosophical, impressionistic musings on night, birds, boats, Spain and valleys. At the time, Ravel was very interested in the innovations that artists and writers of his time were making, and perhaps, using them as models, he created a new kind of music for

himself. He reflected, "The *Miroirs* are a collection of pieces for piano that show a rather considerable change in my harmonic evolution, in that they disconcerted those who, up to that point, considered themselves accustomed to my style." He dedicated each of the pieces in the grouping to one of the friends who had influenced him. The collection consists of five fleeting, dream-like images, each dedicated to one of his circle of literary and musical friends.

***Noctuelles ('Nocturnal moths'), Très léger*,** is a rhythmically free, impressionistic study, basically in a simple three-part form, dedicated to the poet Leon-Paul Fargue, who had written about "moths which take clumsy flight from barn to barn to tie themselves to other beams."

***Oiseaux tristes ('Sad birds'), Très lent*:** "In this work," Ravel said, "I evoke birds lost in a dark forest during summer's hottest hours." Ravel dedicated it to the pianist Ricardo Viñes, who gave the first public performance of *Miroirs*.

***Une barque sur l'océan ('A boat on the ocean'), Très souple*,** is a sunlit symphonic poem, the longest and most difficult piece in the set, dedicated to the painter Paul Sordes. Based on a short motivic cell made up of eighth notes in the right hand against swiftly moving *arpeggios* in the left, the work glistens with many small points of sound through which the lyrical subjects persist. In it, the melodic lines ride over a complicated web of shifting chords, displaying a wide dynamic range and an extreme range of pitch as well. Ravel utilizes the whole keyboard, including the low notes of the piano in an especially soft section.

The fourth piece in the set is the brilliant *Alborada del gracioso* ("The clown's morning song"), *Assez vif*. Historically, the troubadours of the southern province of Provence and an area of northern Spain used a form of poetry, *Alborada* (or *alba*), featuring a song about the lover's departure at early dawn from his love. The word *alborada* can also mean a morning serenade, and it evolved into a type of dance, popular in Galicia. A *gracioso*, a clown or jester in Spanish comedy, analogous to the fools in Shakespeare's plays, often helped musicians in performing the *alborada*. Ravel's *Alborada del gracioso* demonstrates his love for Spain; it is a rhapsodic piece with recitatives, bursts of melody, and echoes of the guitar. The brilliant and complex *Alborada* is sometimes described as more orchestral than pianistic. Ravel dedicated it to his friend, M. D. Calvocoressi, a distinguished musical scholar and critic.

***La vallée des cloches ('The valley of the bells'), Très lent*.** This work, a musical landscape painting, depicts a pastoral vista across which distant bells are heard. Its original inspiration, however, was urban. Ravel told the pianist Robert Casadesu that the idea for it came to him while he listened to the church bells of Paris as they tolled at noon. He dedicated it to the composer Maurice Delage.

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971), trans. Guido Agosti (1901-1989)  
*Suite from The Firebird (L'Oiseau de feu)*

Igor Stravinsky's *Firebird*, which premiered June 25, 1910, is one of the most striking and celebrated orchestral works of the 20th century. This work was commissioned by Sergei Diaghilev, the leader of the Ballet Russes, who sensed in Stravinsky the potential of a vivid imagination and had suggested to him an exotic and familiar Russian fairy tale, with a storyline and choreography by Michel Fokine, as the subject of the new ballet. The resulting work is seen as having been the catalyst that propelled Stravinsky forward to fame. Diaghilev went on to commission two more Stravinsky works: *Petrushka* and *The Rite of Spring*.

The plot of *The Firebird* traces Prince Ivan's pursuit of the brilliant Firebird. After he captures her, he takes pity on her when she pleads for her freedom; she rewards him by giving him one of her feathers as a talisman. Later, in an orchard full of golden apples, he discovers 13 princesses; falling in love with one of them, he follows them to the evil Kaschchei's castle, where the sorcerer and his monsters capture him. After Ivan gets the Firebird to lull Kaschchei and his court to sleep, she leads him to a casket, which contains an egg holding Kaschchei's soul. Ivan destroys the egg, thus freeing the princesses. At the end, Ivan and his princess are wed, and he becomes the ruler of a resplendent city.

The neglected Italian virtuoso pianist/composer/teacher Guido Agosti's piano transcription, which was very popular in the 1940s, recreates the final three movements: *Danse infernale*, *Berceuse*, and *Finale*. Inspired by Stravinsky's orchestration, Agosti's arrangement, completed in 1928, displays intense virtuosity and color as it captures the visceral energy and raw physicality of the original. Agosti dedicated his extremely difficult score to the memory of his teacher, the composer Busoni.

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**Celebrity Series of Boston presents Arts for All! community programs...**

As part of Celebrity Series of Boston's vision of a community of Greater Boston where the performing arts are a valued, lifelong, shared experience, pianist Beatrice Rana met with students at Longy School of Music of Bard College for a Q&A.



**From the Celebrity Series of Boston archives...**

The Celebrity Series of Boston is pleased to present the Boston debut of Italian pianist Beatrice Rana.



**Beatrice Rana piano**



At only 26 years old, Beatrice Rana has already shaken the international classical music world and aroused admiration and interest from concert presenters, conductors, critics, and audiences in many countries.

Ms. Rana performs at the world's most esteemed concert halls and festivals including Vienna's Musikverein, Berlin Philharmonie, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, New York's Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall, Zurich's Tonhalle, London's Wigmore Hall, Royal Albert Hall and Royal Festival Hall, Paris' Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Cologne Philharmonie, Munich's Philharmonie, Prinzregententheater and Herkulesaal, Frankfurt's Alte Oper, Milan's Società dei Concerti, Ferrara Musica, and Verbier Festival. In the US, she has performed at Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival, San Francisco Performances, LA's Disney Concert Hall and Hollywood Bowl, and Washington DC's Kennedy Center. She collaborates with conductors of the highest level such as Riccardo Chailly, Antonio Pappano, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Fabio Luisi, Yuri Temirkanov, and others.

During the 2018/19 and 2019/20 seasons, Ms. Rana makes debuts with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, Bayerische Rundfunk Sinfonieorchester, Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, Danish National Symphony Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Melbourne Symphony, and the American orchestras of Chicago, San Francisco, and Pittsburgh. She performs with the Philadelphia Orchestra with Yannick Nézet-Séguin at Philadelphia's Kimmel Center and New York's Carnegie Hall, Tonkünstler Orchester with Yutaka Sado at the Musikverein, and Detroit Symphony Orchestra with Kent Nagano; tours with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Vladimir Jurowski; and starts a residency at the Zurich Opera with Fabio Luisi and the Philharmonia Zurich for a complete Beethoven concerto cycle. She plays recitals in Geneva, Munich, London, Essen, Berlin, Lisbon, Paris, and Madrid. In addition, she performs at the Gilmore Keyboard Festival and at Zankel Hall in her Carnegie debut.

An exclusive Warner Classics recording artist, Rana has two recently released recordings: *Bach: Goldberg Variations*; and Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 2 and Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 with Antonio Pappano and Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia.

Beatrice Rana first came to public attention in 2011 after winning First Prize at the Montreal International Competition. In 2013, she won the Silver Medal and the Audience Award at the 14th Van Cliburn International Piano Competition.

Born in Italy into a family of musicians, Rana currently lives in Rome where she continues her studies with her lifetime mentor, Benedetto Lupo, and studied previously with Arie Vardi at the Hochschule für Musik in Hanover.